

CALIFORNIA DROUGHT UPDATE

MAY 23, 2022

Current Conditions

- January, February, and March 2022 were the driest on record dating back over 100 years, with just six inches of precipitation observed across the Sierra Nevada.
- Statewide precipitation for the water year to date is 73 percent of average. Sierra-Cascades snowpack for the water year to date is 10 percent of average, down from 18 percent last week. Statewide reservoir storage is 71 percent of average for this time of year.
- All of California's 58 counties are under a drought emergency proclamation. Californians are being asked to reduce their water use by 15 percent over 2020 levels to protect water reserves and help maintain critical flows for fish and wildlife wherever possible.
- As of May 16, the state's [voluntary household dry well reporting system](#) received reports of 92 dry wells in the past 30 days. Fifty-two dry wells were reported in Fresno County alone.

The California Drought Update is a weekly roundup of conditions, state actions and upcoming developments. It is produced by an interagency team that includes the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Environmental Protection Agency, the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the Department of Water Resources, the Department of Fish and Wildlife, the State Water Resources Control Board and the Department of Public Health. For the latest on drought, please visit www.drought.ca.gov. For tips and resources for conserving water, please visit www.saveourwater.com.

Recent Events and State Actions

Governor convenes summit with local water leaders, urges more aggressive response to ongoing drought (May 23): Governor Newsom convened leaders from the state's largest urban water suppliers and water associations and implored them to take more aggressive actions to combat drought and better engage their customers to ensure all Californians are doing their part to save water. After the last drought, local water agencies pushed for greater flexibility on water conservation and drought response based on regional needs and water supplies, arguing that tailored local approaches would be more effective than statewide mandates. The Governor has embraced this localized approach but warned in the meeting that if this localized approach to conservation does not result in a significant reduction in water use statewide this summer, the state could be forced to enact mandatory restrictions. The Governor will reconvene these same agencies in the next two months to provide an update on their progress.



Secretary Crowfoot joins LA Mayor Garcetti for drought event

(May 20): California Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot joined Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti to discuss the current state of the drought and highlight several critical water conservation tactics that will help Angelenos do their part to lower their water use. While discussing the ways that residents can improve their conservation efforts, Mayor Garcetti and Secretary Crowfoot focused on the role that trees play as a key tool to stave off the impacts of drought, thanks to their ability to capture stormwater, improve water quality, and help reduce flood risks at the neighborhood level. They also reminded California residents that new watering restrictions do not apply to tree-watering and encouraged residents to continue watering their trees by hand. "California has experienced the driest first three months of the year on record, and drought is worsening throughout the West," Secretary Crowfoot said. "Climate-driven water extremes are part of our reality now. We need to act now to save water, even as we invest to become more resilient to this new normal. Watering less outdoors — while taking care to prioritize our urban trees — is a step we can all easily take."



Groundwater trading white paper (May 18): The Water Commission finalized a white paper containing findings around how to shape well-managed groundwater trading programs and proposed next steps for State engagement. The white paper synthesizes the information the Commission gathered for its consideration of well-managed groundwater trading programs to support a Water Resilience Portfolio action related to a state role in groundwater trading programs.

Improved forecasting workshop: DWR and the Western States Water Council co-hosted a science workshop on improving sub-seasonal to seasonal precipitation forecasting to support drought preparedness **May 17-19.**

Recent Events and State Actions

Federal drought relief for farmers (May 16): The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced that commodity and specialty crop producers impacted by natural disaster events in 2020 and 2021 will soon begin receiving emergency relief payments totaling approximately \$6 billion through the Farm Service Agency's new Emergency Relief Program (ERP) to offset crop yield and value losses. On September 30, 2021, President Biden signed into law the Extending Government Funding and Delivering Emergency Assistance Act, which includes \$10 billion in assistance to agricultural producers impacted by wildfires, droughts, hurricanes, winter storms, and other eligible disasters experienced during calendar years 2020 and 2021.

Curtailments adjustments (ongoing): As drought conditions persist, the State Water Board continues to monitor six critical watersheds where worsening conditions may threaten water supplies. Curtailments remain in effect in the Delta watershed, two sub-watersheds of the Delta, and in the Shasta River watershed. Based on current conditions and available forecasts, curtailments in the Russian River watershed are temporarily suspended through the end of May, and curtailments in the Scott River watershed are temporarily suspended through May 27. Water Board staff will continue to adjust curtailment orders as conditions change.



Save Our Water content available in multiple languages (ongoing): Multi-lingual Save Our Water ads communicate the urgent need to save water and provide actionable steps Californians can take. The Save Our Water campaign is reaching Californians with helpful videos and tips for fixing leaks and reducing outdoor watering. Visit www.saveourwater.com for more.

Tribal / Local Actions

- **Tribal governments:** Tribal emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Buena Vista Rancheria of Me-Wuk Indians, Karuk Tribe, Resighini Rancheria, Tule River Indian Tribe, Yurok Tribe, Wiyot Tribe.
- **Local government:** Local emergency drought proclamations as reported by Cal OES to date: Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Humboldt, Lake, Madera, Marin, Mendocino, Modoc, Napa, Nevada, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Tulare, Tuolumne, Yolo.

Key Data Points and Resources

- Daily Hydrological & Climate Information summary: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=DLYHYDRO>
- Statewide water conditions: http://cdec.water.ca.gov/water_cond.html
- Daily Reservoir Storage Summary: <https://cdec.water.ca.gov/reservoir.html>
- Water Year Forecast and Monthly Distribution: <http://cdec.water.ca.gov/reportapp/javareports?name=B120DIST>
- Monthly water supplier reports on water production and conservation: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/conservation_portal/conservation_reporting.html
- Latest groundwater conditions and information: <https://sgmatest.water.ca.gov/CalGWLlive/>
- Information on state drought actions and assistance: <https://www.drought.ca.gov>
- Conservation tips and resources for consumers: <https://saveourwater.com/>